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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF INFORMATION

Friday, December 22, 1944

SUBJECT: Streamline Those Holiday Jobs: Information from home management specialists of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Now that Christmas is almost here, let's pause for a moment and think about that final push.

Yes, I know you have a million last-minute things to do. Presents to buy. Gifts to wrap. Decorations to arrange. And then there's the marketing. Buying enough groceries for holiday meals over a long weekend is a big job in itself.

Does just thinking of all the things you have to do leave you sort of breathless? Then here's a tip. Take time out, right now, to streamline these holiday jobs...to make them as simple and as easy and as light on yourself as you possibly can. Otherwise you'll wear yourself out. And you won't have the strength and spirit to enjoy Christmas with the rest of the family.

How can you streamline the thousand and one little jobs that will fill your days this Christmas season?

Well, here are some suggestions from home management specialists of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

First of all, chart your course with a "must and maybe" list. Sit down and make a list of all the things you'd like to get done during the next four days. Make a list for each day. Put down the things that you feel you simply have to do in your "must" list. Put all the other tasks in your "maybe" list. Then you won't forget anything. If the family's around the house, get them to help you make out the list and say what they will do.

You can save a lot of wear and tear on your nerves and your energy if you keep the list of "must" tasks down. Don't have too many "musts" in your list. Fill up the "maybe" column instead. If you have just a few "musts" you'll have time to get them done. Don't worry too much if one is left over at the end of the

day. You can get to that task tomorrow.

Post your "must and maybe" list in the kitchen where you and other members of the family can check on it from time to time. Something may come up that you'll need to add to your list. Or you may be able to scratch off one or two "musts" and several "maybes". Big advantage of having the list is that you get the important things done. The others don't matter so much.

Christmas is a time when the family enjoys working and playing together more than any other time of the year. Let the children help you think of ways to save time and ways to avoid lost motion.

This weekend, you'll spend a lot of time in the kitchen fixing good things for the family feast. Take it easy. Arrange your work that takes time on a table so that you have plenty of room. A card table makes a mighty good working space. It's just about the right height for a kitchen chair too. Get everything at hand so that you don't need to get up and so that you can reach your supplies without too much stretching and bending. Then pull up a comfortable chair and enjoy your work. Dad and the children will enjoy helping you do a lot of these holiday jobs...picking out the nuts, peeling the fruits and vegetables, making celery curls and carrot sticks.

Don't feel lazy because you're sitting while you work. It's done in the best of war plants. Industrial engineers say that a woman who's comfortably seated can turn out a whole lot more work than the woman who's tired from standing. So sit when you can.

You'll find you can do some of the other holiday work while you're sitting too. You can wrap some of the packages while you're sitting down. Or on Christmas morning when all the presents have been unwrapped, whoever gathers up the pretty wrappings and ribbons can sit on the floor to do it. Have a big box handy to put them in.

Of course you're serving a big Christmas dinner but you won't need to cook a feast for every meal during the holidays. Plan some meals that are easy to cook and easy to serve. One dish meals that cut down on the dishwashing. Your family will enjoy these lighter meals in contrast to the big dinner and it'll be a lot easier on you.

So you see, it is possible for you to streamline a lot of your holiday duties. You can cut down on some work. You can save your strength by doing the work the easy way. You can sit while you do a lot of household jobs..

Even so, you may find that you're tired at times when it seems you have the most to do. And in that case, you'll find that you don't seem to be getting on very fast with the job at hand because you are tired.

You can get a new start by resting for 5....10..or 15 minutes. Stretch out on the sofa or across the bed. Or sit in a comfortable chair where you can pick up a magazine or newspaper. Relax completely for a few minutes. Then get up and go back to your work. You'll find it moves a lot faster. And your energy is renewed.

Yes, you're going to have your hands full these next few days. It's in the cards. Everybody around the house will turn to Mom. You feel that it's your responsibility to see that every member of the family has a joyous Christmas. But don't forget, you can do a better job at home during the holidays if you take time to save time.

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